

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 01685

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: NATO, MARR
SUBJECT: CONTINUED SQUABBLE OVER NAMSA POSTS

REF: USNATO 01552

1. SYG LUNS APPROACHED AMBASSADOR EVENING FEB. 16 ON QUESTION OF NAMSA OFFICES. HE APPEALED TO US TO WITHDRAW ITS CANDIDACY FOR CHAIRMAN OF NAMSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON GROUNDS OF IMPASSE BETWEEN FRG AND ITALY WITH RESPECT POST OF NAMSA GEN. MGR. VOTE IN RECENT PRIVATE MEETING OF NAC HAD BEEN 11-2 IN FAVOR FRG CANDIDATE. ITALIANS WERE NOW TAKING POSITION THAT THEY WOULD WITHDRAW IN FAVOR FRG ONLY IN EVENT THEY RECEIVED POST OF CHAIRMAN OF BOARD. LUNS URGED, THEREFORE, THAT US WITHDRAW ITS CANDIDACY IN ORDER RESOLVE IMPASSE.

2. BENNETT EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THIS PROPOSAL, COMMENTING THAT ITALIANS WERE GETTING IN THE HABIT OF POSING THIS KIND OF ULTIMATUM AND RECALLING RECENT IMBROGLIO OVER ITALIAN DEMAND (SUCCESSFUL) TO REPLACE PANSAS AS DEP SYG WITH PETRIGNANI. BENNETT POINTED OUT US HAD
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ALWAYS HELD POST OF NAMSA CHAIRMAN AND THAT INDEED WE HAD ALWAYS FUNDED THE POSITION. THERE HAD NEVER BEEN ANY INTEREST IN THE JOB ON PART OF OTHERS, AND IT WAS GENERALLY CONCEDED AMERICAN CHAIRMEN HAD DONE GOOD JOB. ACCORDINGLY, WE EXPECT TO CONTINUE TO HOLD THE POSITION. IN HIS VIEW, A COUNTRY (ITALY) WHICH HAD ONLY ATTRACTED ONE VOTE (FRANCE) OTHER THAN ITS OWN FOR ITS CANDIDATE,

AGAINST TEN COLLECTED BY FRG IN FREE COMPETITION, SHOULD GRACEFULLY WITHDRAW. LUNS CLAIMED PORTUGAL ALSO SUPPORTED ITALY (PORTUGAL ABSTAINED IN LAST POLL IN NAC). OK, SAID BENNETT, 10-2; THE GERMAN CANDIDATE WAS STILL THE OVERWHELMING FAVORITE. HOWEVER, ASSERTED LUNS, ITALY WAS UNDERREPRESENTED IN NATO STAFF. HE APPEALED AGAIN FOR WITHDRAWAL OF US CANDIDATE, SAYING WE HAD MADE OUR WISHES KNOWN LATE IN THE DAY AND THIS HAD UPSET ITALIAN AMB NO END. BENNETT COUNTERED THAT WE HAD ALWAYS HELD THE POST, AND REITERATED THERE HAD HERETOFORE BEEN NO INTEREST IN IT BY OTHERS. ITALIANS HAD QUITE RECENTLY DISCLAIMED INTEREST AND HAD INDEED SOUGHT TO PERSUADE GERMANS TO GO AFTER IT SO AS TO CLEAR NAMSA GENERAL MANAGER POST FOR ITALY. WE HAD HAD NO REASON TO THINK THERE WOULD BE OTHER CANDIDATES.

3. IN RESPONSE LUNS' CONTINUED URGING -- HE SEEMS TO FEEL HE HAS TO "DO SOMETHING" FOR ITALIAN AMB. AS DEAN OF NATO CORPS -- BENNETT SAID HE WOULD OF COURSE REPORT REQUEST TO DEPT, BUT HE COULD NOT HOLD OUT HOPE WE WOULD WITHDRAW CANDIDACY FOR POST WE HAD ALWAYS FILLED TO GENERAL SATISFACTION.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: INSTRUCTIONS RE CANDIDACY FOR CHAIRMAN OF NAMSA BOARD. FROM HERE WE SEE NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD WITHDRAW MERELY TO MOLLIFY PRETENSIONS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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ITALIAN DEAN AT NATO, EVEN THOUGH HE WILL NO DOUBT PRODUCE TANTRUMS AND ALARUMS IF WE MAINTAIN OUR POSITION, AND POSSIBLY A RENEWED EFFORT BY ITALIANS, SUPPORTED BY FRENCH, TO DENY POST OF NAMSA GEN MGR TO FRG. THERE WILL BE CONTINUED PRESSURE FROM LUNS, AND GERMANS WOULD OF COURSE BE GLAD TO HAVE US YIELD SO AS TO ENSURE THEIR GETTING THE NAMSA JOB. IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO RETAINING THE POST OF NAMSA CHAIRMAN.GLITMAN

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